



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES: Regular Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 13, 2022
Approved: September 14, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING: Steven Kline, Chair; Dulcie Flaharty, V-Chair; Charles Tornetta; Robert Blue; John Ernst; Jonathan Rinde; Nicole Kline-Elsier

STAFF ATTENDING: Scott France, Drew Shaw, Eric Jarrell, Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, Bill Hartman, Matthew Popek, Jon Leshner, Anne Nygard, Claire Warner, Marley Bice, Rita McKelvey, John Marlatt, Karina Caddick

GUESTS: Brandon Ford, Springfield Township; Alexandra Klinger, Springfield Township Springfield Open Space; Melinda Wolff, Lower Gwynedd Twp.; Tamara Holt; Desiree Rammon, Springfield Township EAC

I. Call to Order/Board Comments

II. Minutes of June 8, 2022

Jonathan Rinde requested that the meeting minutes reflect a board request during the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Awards presentation. The board members discussed requiring a post construction certification for future grant recipients. The board approved the minutes with correction from the June 8, 2022 regular Board meeting.

***Motion:** To approve the June 8, 2022 Board minutes, by Mr. Ernst, seconded by Ms. Flaharty, and approved by all present.*

III. Public Comment

None

IV. County Climate Action Plan

Presenter: Jon Leshner; Guest: Brandon Ford, Springfield Township

Jon Leshner provided an overview of the draft Montco Climate Action 2050 Plan. Jon introduced Brandon Ford who is Springfield Townships Assistant Manager and Co-Chair of the Montgomery County Resiliency Partnership. The Planning Commission and the Resiliency Partnership received a grant to develop a local climate action plan for Montgomery County. The Montco Climate Action 2050 plan is currently in draft form and seeking input from the public and today from the MCPC Board. The plan's purpose is to make the region more adaptive and resilient to climate change and to encourage mitigation measures that can prevent further impacts. Jon Leshner and Brandon Ford provided a summary of the action plan and allowed time for questions, suggestions and input regarding the plan.

The board members provided lots of feedback about the draft Climate Action Plan. Steven Kline asked who would be tracking or monitoring the implementation and metrics into the future. Mr. Leshner responded that the Planning Commission would do some of the tracking. Municipalities have metric information already available that can be updated regularly. Ms. Flaharty highlighted the increase of TOD development with multifamily development that can provide good metrics for the study. Nicole Kline-Elsier referenced DVRPC's Journey to work data as another good metric that could be used during the implementation. She stated that it examines where people live in relation to where they work and how residents travel to work, by car or transit.

Dulcie Flaharty spoke about possible incentives for climate action. Charlie Tornetta and Bob Blue suggested offering tax credits and savings as an incentive to encourage residents to make these investments. Steve Kline agreed that formulas could be

developed that offer incentives through taxation or land use opportunities. For example, there are ordinances that provide incentives for green roofs. Mr. Leshner responded that as communities begin to adopt these strategies the hope is that it will benefit them when making future funding requests. He also believes that the case studies included in the plan will highlight the value and benefit of climate action.

Other suggestions included using case studies to provide examples on the avoided costs with climate action. Mr. Kline suggested that Montgomery County attract companies that are interested in developing technology that could help us to achieve our climate goals. John Ernst suggested targeting large businesses, school districts, residents and non-profits as a way to gain the interest of elected officials who can make an impact for change.

V. Springfield Township Planning Assistance Contract Presentation

Presenter: Anne Nygard

Anne Nygard presented an overview of the Springfield Township Planning Assistance Contract. Springfield Township is located in the southeastern part of Montgomery County and has a population of approximately 20,000 residents. Ms. Nygard provided a summary of the local government, demographics and displayed the current land use map. She noted that Springfield Township is mainly residential with areas of institutional and retail mixed use. The previous contract work included an Off-street Parking ordinance, a review of a Historic Resource Overlay District ordinance and SALDO updates. Ms. Nygard stated that the focus for the new contract would include continued work on updating the subdivision and land development ordinance, as the current ordinance dates back to 1950. Other work includes a Trail Feasibility Study with the assistance of our Open Space section. The trail study will evaluate existing access points and identify the gaps in order to provide the township with recommendations for future trail improvements. Springfield Township will then like to begin work on one of two projects, either a Comprehensive Plan Update or a Zoning Code update.

VI. 2022 Work Program – Mid-year update and progress

Presenter: Scott France, Section Managers

Scott France, MCPC section manager, and select staff presented a mid-year update of the 2022 Work Program. The purpose of the presentation was to provide a status report of where projects are at the half point of the year. The presenters spoke about select projects included in the Work Program. The projects were categorized into three sections: completed, on track for completion or delayed/put on hold. Mr. France explained that when a project has been delayed it may be due to an internal cause, such as limited staff. However, when a project is on hold, this is often due to an external cause, such as a municipality-driven or other agency delay. The Work Program update provided an overview of Focus Topics, Signature Initiatives and the Community Planning Contracts. The board members were thankful of the update and look forward to learning more about these projects in the future.

VII. Director's Report

1. Scott France acknowledged the following mid-year staff promotions.
 - Simon Bernnard to County Planner II
 - John Miklos to Community Planner II
 - Claire Warner to Senior Community Planner
 - Donna Fabry to Principal Open Space Planner I
 - Marley Bice to Assistant Community Planning Section Manager
2. Mr. France shared that an offer has been accepted for the Assistant Section Manager of Design position.
3. Mr. France also shared that Daniel Farina has accepted a position with DVRPC as a Senior Freight Planner. His last day will be this Friday.
4. The Planning Commission staff sends farewell wishes to Samantha Zrillo who will complete her internship this week.
5. MCPC currently has three open positions, two County Planner positions and an Environmental Planner position.

6. Mr. France announced that three APA PA conference session submissions were accepted for the annual APA PA conference in Lancaster, PA. The session topics are Planning for TOD, Environmental Vulnerability Assessment and Trail Diversity and Access. We are also collaborating with Lower Merion on some of their submissions.
7. The MCPC Annual report was distributed to the board members attending in person and will be shared digitally.
8. The Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority had their first board meeting on July 6. There are three board members from Montgomery County, Commissioner Ken Lawrence, Dave Zellers and Scott France. Ken Lawrence was elected Treasurer and Scott France was elected Secretary.
9. Scott France provided an ARPA update. The draft plan will be released on Monday and we will find out if the ten projects that we were involved with were accepted.
10. The Montco 2050 Comprehensive Plan update included work on the Transportation and Public Health section.
11. Mr. France announced that The Outdoor Recreation Program has grant funding available
12. The Planning Smarter event, Strategies to Enhance Walking and Bicycling was held in Pottstown on June 16. The next Planning Smarter event will be Return on Environment Study in October.
13. Mr. Kline announced that the August board meeting is cancelled. The board is planning an away meeting for October in the Upper Perkiomen region.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45.

The next Board meeting will be on September 14, 2022 at 9:00 AM.